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ABSTRACT

The context of educational reform within which U.S. higher education has worked in selected Latin American countries is examined, with attention directed to the specific experience of the University of New Mexico. The evolution of the Latin American Programs in Education office (LAPE) in the university setting, the organizational milieu in which the university attempts to deliver its professional expertise in the international arena, and the impact of those efforts upon the host countries who have been the recipients of the university's services are considered. Although in the early years LAPE was a marginal unit within the university, over a 15-year period it has achieved full legitimacy as a result of the growth of the bilingual faculty in the College of Education and in other university units, as well as the creation of a master's degree program in educational administration and supervision specifically designed for Latin American educators and conducted completely in Spanish. Attention is directed to the differences in degrees of bureaucracy among the cooperating units, the differences in time perspective and orientation, the differences in relationship to impersonality and value-neutrality, and the differences in organizational perspectives derived from goal differences. The difficulties of dealing simultaneously with three superstructures and three cultures--the university, the United States Agency for International Development, and the foreign government--are considered. The need for caution in evaluating the impact of the university program on educational practice in Latin America is addressed. (SW)

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A Retrospective Examination of a University's Thirteen Years in Latin America

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended to serve an exploratory purpose, examining selected aspects of the University of New Mexico's interaction with Latin America. First, the authors will review a dimension of the University's involvement in Latin America, specifically the evolution of the Latin American Programs in Education office (LAPE) in the University setting. Second, the authors will attempt to focus on the organizational milieu in which the university attempts to deliver its professional expertness in the international arena. Third, the authors will attempt to discuss the impact of those efforts upon the host countries who have been the recipients of the University's services. More generally, this paper is an effort to order some knowledge gained from experience and to raise initial questions to be addressed by researchers interested in the issues confronted by those attempting to influence the development of education in other countries through technical assistance and participant training programs.

Section I

The University and the Evolution of LAPE

In 1965, Dr. Frank angel, Jr., then Assistant Dean for Special Projects in the College of Education, proposed a training program to the Ministry of Education in Paraguay. The program was funded through the Agency for International Development for a 12 month period and a group of 31 participants from the Ministry of Education was sent to the University campus for training. The program was intended to enhance the skills and activities of rural school teachers. It was with that program that the College of Education at the University of New Mexico entered the Latin American arena. Since that time, the University has worked actively in a dozen countries in Latin America. These include Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatamala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

The nature of the University's participation in those countries has been of two primary types. The first type consisted of technical assistance, that is, educators from the University working in host countries, offering consultative services to various Ministries of Education. The second type has been conducted on campus, i.e., Ministries of Education of various countries have sent students, singly and in large groups, to the University campus for training in various specializations.

As the work with Latin America began to accelerate, Dr. Frank Angel became in essence the full-time director of the College's Latin American Programs in Education. As is true with many evolving units in universities, the original funding for Dr. Angel's salary as Director of LAPE was

generated from soft money as was the case for all other employees of the office. The dollar volume generated through the University's activities grew to a substantial amount over time. The cumulative total dollar value of the Lat-n American contracts as this paper is being written amounts to $6,173,054 generating a cumulative total of overhead accruing to the University of $864,974. As is true of units in the "soft money" category, organizational life remained somewhat perilous in the early years of the Latin American Programs in Education. The lack of a contract at any one point in time held the potential for dismantling the office. In those conditions of emergency, the University did provide funding to maintain a skeleton staff for the office, although at each of those crisis points, the office staff were required to behave as if they were standing on the edge of a cliff, and only through frantic gyrations were they able to generate the necessary resources from the University to stave off a fall from the precipice.

It was not until 1973 that an arrangement was made with the University to place its first "hard money" in the office in order to create some kind of stability for the director of the programs. This amounted to the University placing the director on one-half salary in an academic department. The direction of University support has continued to be in a positive direction. At the present time, the full salary of the director and two other of the office staff members are guaranteed by the University, removing some of the anxieties about the employment longevity of the staff. Indeed, it is surprising that two of the staff members have been with the unit since its inception in 1965. There have been, during that time, only four directors of Latin American Programs in

Education office, relatively few in number given the instability which surrounds the type of activities conducted by the office.

Apart from the core staff of the office, a very large number of individuals have been actively involved in program activity, both on campus and in host countries. Since its inception, the office has utilized 120 individuals as short-term consultants, for periods of less than one year. The office has also employed 46 long-term technicians, individuals serving for twelve or more months of continuous service in Latin America. Over time, a significant change occurred in the nature of the individuals participating as both short-term and long-term consultants.

In the early years of the office, the short- and long-term consultants tended to be recruited from off campus. These were individuals who were employed in the public school system in New Mexico. In those early years, the University itself employed amongst its full-time staff relatively few Spanish-speaking professionals, thus creating the necessity to reach into the external community for Spanish-speaking educators. It is clear that the University's ability to enter the Latin America arena was based primarily on the fact that the population in New Mexico was heavily bilingual--Spanish/English. This human resource of well-trained educators who were bilingual was maximized by Dr. Angel as he initiated the Latin American activity in the College of Education.

Over time a shift occurred as the University acquired larger numbers of Spanish speakers amongst its own staff. If we select 1973 as the mid-point of the history of the office and examine the proportion of University of New Mexico staff and faculty utilized as short- and long-term technicians, the following percentages emerge. Prior to 1973, 85% of the short-term

technicians were employed from off campus positions and only 15% from on campus. In the period from 1973 to the present, those proportions altered dramatically to 28% from off campus and 75% from on campus. A rather dramatic reversal. The same pattern is apparent in the use of long-term technicians. Prior to 1973, 88% were recruited from off-campus positions and only 12% from on-campus positions. From 1973 to the present, the ratio shifts dramatically to 12% from off campus to 88% on campus.

Without making ascertations directly as to cause and effect, the shifting proportions, in good part we believe, account for the University's increased willingness to provide hard money assurance to the operation of the office. In the early years of the office, it was difficult to gain campus support as the proportion of individuals involved on the campus was rather small. Over time, as these proportions shifted and larger numbers of individuals on the campus became involved in the program, obtaining support from the central administration became a somewhat more achievable task. It is clear that the University's ability to utilize greater numbers of short- and long-term technicians from amongst its full-time employees was in good part due to the Civil Rights Movement which created those sets of conditions which were conducive to the hiring of Hispanics in the university setting. An important side effect in the use of off campus personnel had been and remains, but to a lesser degree, the involvement of professional educators from the state's public school system in the activity of the University, assisting in the University's relations with the field.

A second significant and somewhat unanticipated effect has been the large number of individuals who through their participation in the Latin American activities arena have found new career paths or who have had

existing career paths influenced quite strongly.[1] Without being exhaustive in our listing, we would like to take note of the influence of Latin American activity in the careers of the following selected individuals who early in their careers worked with the Latin American Programs in Education office:

1. Dr. Mari-Luci Jaramillo, who became United States Ambassador to Honduras in 1977 and later Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of Inter-American Affairs.
2. Dr. Frank Angel, founder of LAPE, who later became President of Highlands University and this country's first Hispanic president of a four-year higher education institution.
3. Dr. John Aragon, who succeeded Dr. Angel as President of Highlands University.
4. Mr. Robert Ruiz-Esparza, who is currently a program officer for Latin America for the World Bank.
5. Dr. Thomas Arciniega, who is currently Vice President for Academic Affairs at California State University in Fresno.
6. Dr. Ambrosio Ortega, who serves as education officer for U. S. A.I.D., Honduras.
7. Mr. Joseph Gandert, who recently served as Chief of Party for the University's project in Bolivia and is currently Associate Director of the Cultural Awareness Center of the College of Education at the University of New Mexico.
8. Mr. Ernest Gurule, who served as Chief of Party in a Paraguayan project and who is currently the Director of the Cultural Awareness Center.

It is especially important to note the effect of the Latin American Programs activity on the careers of the Hispanics listed above as well as many others. Of all of the individuals involved at the professional level in the office's activities, 78% have been Spanish surnamed. Of the long-term technicians utilized by the office, 73% were Spanish surnamed and 27% non-Hispanic. Of the short-term technicians, 76% were Spanish surnamed and 24% not Spanish surnamed. This ratio held from 1965 to 1974 and remained essentially unchanged during the 1974 to 1980 period.

In many ways, the Latin American Programs in Education Office could have been described during its early years quite accurately as a marginal unit within the University. It was not perceived as being directly related to any of the three traditional primary functions of the University, i.e., research, teaching and service. The instruction was primarily carried out under non-degree conditions. The research consisted mainly of program or project evaluations, and the service function was difficult to legitimize as the client population was quite distant.

With the growth of the bilingual faculty in the College of Education and in other units on the University campus, efforts at full legitimation grew and some successes have been achieved. One significant step in that direction was the creation of a Master's Degree program in Educational Administration and Supervision specifically designed for Latin American educators and conducted completely in Spanish. The program conforms to all of the normal requirements of a Master's Degree program and is perceived as a normal offering of the University. A policy change was required in order to allow for students' admission to the graduate school without passing an English proficiency test. This policy change

involved the work of the Senate Committee for Graduate Programs and Standards. The Faculty Senate Committee responsible for the quality control of graduate education engaged the issue and approved the necessary policy change. The engagement of this committee with the Latin American programs added to the legitimation of the work of the office.

The Master's Degree Program is now in its second year of operation and has graduated its first class of Latin American educators from eight different countries and has enrolled its second cohort of participants. This movement to regular academic offerings not in project status received the support of the President's office and fortunately of the Regents. In addition to moving toward legitimacy in the instructional program on campus, the office is now seeking funding for an inter-American journal in educational administration which would again move the activity more tightly into the core mission of the University. The creation of the journal would allow a vehicle for the publication of research not now available for those who work in the area of Latin America.

SUMMARY

This section of the paper has attempted to order some of the experiences which the authors have noted during the development of the Latin American Programs in Education office at the University of New Mexico. It has become apparent that beginning as a marginal unit the office has worked its way over a period of 15 years toward the goal of legitimacy in the University setting. The research which is called for in this area would be an ethnographic study of the office in order to account for a fully understand its evolution within the College of

Education and the University of New Mexico. In addition to understanding the process of legitimation of the work in the international arena, it is also important to understand that the program efforts in the Latin American area have led to some unanticipated consequences in terms of providing career routes for Hispanics in the University. The program development, in concert with the Civil Rights Movement of the time, appears to have produced some rather interesting results.

Section II

The University and the Cultural-Organizational Milieu

Normally, in the conduct of an organization, only the operation of its own bureaucracy and perhaps one other must be understood by the personnel of the organization. When the University moved into the arena of international education, three distinct organizational structures became involved in the planning, operation and evaluation of projects: the University itself, the United States Agency for International Development (A.I.D.), and host country ministries of education. Collaboration between the three organizations involves an understanding of three different bureaucracy types and differing goals. In the following pages we will note some of these differences, first in degree of bureaucratization, and secondly in goal differentiation.

The degree of bureaucratization of the University, A.I.D. (which has funded the majority of LAPE projects) and host country Ministries of Education differ along several salient dimensions. If one considers an organization which generally complies with the criteria established by Weber (with special reference to the structure created by a network of

impersonal rules and regulations) one may assume that the University and A.I.D. have relatively highly structured bureaucracies, i.e., heavy reliance on impersonal rules with authority presumed to reside in offices as opposed to individuals. Host country Ministries of Education, on the other hand, with which the University and A.I.D. must collaborate, have in general, relatively loosely-structured bureaucracies, which can best be characterized as relying upon highly individual behavior within personalized hierarchies with little reliance upon written rules as a means to achieve tasks. While there is no shortage of written rules and regulations in the various Ministries of Education, there is a notable lack of belief that reliance upon such rules are significant ways to achieve tasks.

The organizational differences just cited are reflective of more endemic differences among the national societies and cultures. Again as an example, in the United States within the recent past there has been a high reliance on value neutrality as a way to conduct oneself not only in bureaucratic organizations but in the conduct or research and teaching as well. This stance stands in direct opposition to the norms of Latin American countries which tend to regard value neutrality as a negative, not a positive, human trait. As the University attempted to deliver its technical expertness to Latin American countries through the Agency for International Development, it too emphasized the value-neutral nature of its own expertness and in this manner attempted to avoid involvement in the value questions confronting the Latin American countries, an increasingly doubtful strategy. In sum, the differences between the participating organizations in their degree of reliance on impersonality as a means to achieve organizational tasks is compounded by the societal differences

relating to value-neutrality.

The three organizational superstructures involved in accomplishment of technical assistance programs also tend to differ rather dramatically in the rate of turnover of personnel. The University normally has a low turnover rate so that knowledge about and commitment to a particular project are fairly stable amongst its personnel. A.I.D., on the other hand, typically transfers its personnel to other posts every two to four years. A possible result is that at any time during a particular project, new A.I.D. personnel having neither a firm understanding of project activities nor of the educational system in which the project is working may be introduced to monitor project activities. Furthermore, A.I.D. personnel ma- identify with and commit themselves to the operation of the entire agency and not with their short-term duties in any one country. Considering the turnover rate of ministry personnel, the outlook can best be described as unpredictable. While some minimal turnover can be expected routinely as individuals move from the public to the more lucrative private sector, the potential for massive turnover as a function of change in government (routine or revolutionary) is an ever-present reality. Under the latter condition the loss of organizational and program continuity is obvious, but one with which both the University and A.I.D. personnel must cope.

Bolivia is the most extreme case of governmental instability in Latin America. Throughout its entire history Bolivia has changed governments at an average rate of more than once a year. At times changes in government result in a breaking of diplomatic relations and recognition between the countries. As in the case of Bolivia, the University of New Mexico found itself offering technical assistance to a country whose government the United States no longer recognized, and, as of the writing of this paper, has not yet recognized.

In addition to the differences among the organizations in regard to bureaucratic structure and differing rates of personnel turnover, the work is compounded by differences as pragmatic as the dates of fiscal years. It is possible on any one project that the contracting institution (The University), the monitoring agency (A.I.D.) and the host country may operate on three different fiscal years thus making budget management and report writing a most complex undertaking.

While it is frequently said that the conception of time in Latin America differs greatly from the conception of time in the United States, it is also important to note that the time frame for processing agreements and documents also differs greatly among the three collaborating superstructures. These are indeed compounded by the cultural differences in time orientations. While in the University there is a moderate period of time, a few months, to process documents (e.g., respong to RFP's and have proposals approved), the A.I.D. time frame for similar activities is in terms of years (e.g., it may be three to four years between the time a project is identified and when the project activities actua-ly begin). Ministries of Education, on the other hand, may be quite unpredictable in the time needed to process project agreements and documents depending upon any number of relevant political variables (e.g., changes in government which may be highly disruptive).

Aside from structural-bureaucratic differences among the three superstructures, their organizational goals may be of different types also. Eisenstadt demonstrates that differences in goal types influence the operational structure and outside relations of an organization.[2] He further suggests a typology of goals, including political, cultural, and economic.[3]

Normatively, the University uses cultural goals primarily as it attempts to encourage the adaptation of educational practices (culture) in Latin American settings. An underlying goal of A.I.D. can be said to be the prevention of political chaos and communist domination of governments. Intermediate goals, though, are to promote host country economic development and project cost efficiency. It may be said, therefore, that the goals of A.I.D. are both political and economic in nature.

Ministries of Education have, in general, goals similar to those of A.I.D. but perhaps more weighted toward the political. An apparent conflict exists, therefore, when the University, A.I.D., and a host country sign a technical assistance contract while all three institutions simultaneously attempt to achieve what may be mutually exclusive goals.[4]

The differences in operational perspectives which are derived from the differing goals become apparent in some rather dramatic ways. While working in Bolivia, the University encountered the following situation. The building of a normal school was central to the achievement of the ministry's program of rural education r-form. However, the building of the school was delayed for approximately two years, primarily due to A.I.D.'s insistence that the Ministry of Education had not followed appropriate bid procedures. A.I.D. was concerned that the best contractor at the most economical price was not being considered or selected. From the Ministry of Education's perspective, as best we can gage it, the building of the normal school had primacy insofar as political goals would be well served both by the flow of money and by the construction effort in the rural area. From the University's perspective, the building of the normal

school as a physical facility was critical to the achievement of the program's cultural goals. In the above case, competing goals resulted in considerable frustration for all three organizational units involved.

A second example is drawn from joint plans laid by the University's technical assistance team and their Bolivian counterparts for an in-service training program at the national level for rural school teachers. In this case, the University's program goals and the project goals of the Bolivian counterparts were heavily dependent upon holding the in-service training. Despite a year's planning and development effort, several days prior to the planned events, the Bolivian government closed all of the schools in the country because of anticipated political difficulties arising from active teacher organizations. Again, a situation was encountered in which competing goals became mutually exclusive.

SUMMARY

In this section of the paper, the authors have tried to order their experiences and observations regarding differences in the cultural and organizational milieu in which the University attempts to conduct its technical assistance and participant training programs. The differences noted are not all-inclusive, but we believe that they are significant, i.e., the differences in degrees of bureaucratization among the cooperating units, the differences in time perspective and orientation, the differences in relationship to impersonality and value-neutrality, and finally the differences in organizational perspectives derived from goal differences. All need to be understood as a totality.

A research effort which attempted to enter into a rather rigorous conceptualization of the cultural and organizational milieus which surround the technical assistance efforts of a university would be highly useful.

Section III

Impact on Educational Processes in the Host Country

Most of the research regarding the work of the University in Technical Assistance Programs has been in the form of project evaluations. Most of these evaluations have not been very optimistic about goal achievement, especially in relation to the goals as articulated in the proposals which were presented to and funded by Congress. As is not too unusual, proposal goals are large, important and wide-ranging. More often the program effects are considerably more modest. It would appear that in reaching conclusions about the impact on education practice in host countries one needs to take a larger and longer view than is provided by a single project: one needs to look for evidence of the cumulative effect of projects attempted over a number of years.

It strikes the authors that, at times, the expectations held both on the part of the University and A.I.D. about what can be achieved within the framework of a single project far exceed the practicality of changes of a similar magnitude in this country. To carry off a curriculum reform, its attendant reformation of teacher training, school construction and materials development with ease within a project format could not, we suspect, be readily achieved in the wealthiest and most liberal public school district in this country. At times, in reaching judgments about the lack of effect of our program efforts, criteria seem to come into use which are more rigorous than we utilize to judge progress in New York City, Los Angeles or Albuquerque.

Bilingual education has been a focus of A.I.D. in Peru, in Paraguay, and in Bolivia, and the University of New Mexico, to one degree or another,

has provided technical assistance and training in cooperation with these efforts. Those programs are in growth stages and are encountering significant difficulty. One should not rush to the judgment that the projects have been singularly ineffective. In Albuquerque, we have been attempting to incorporate bilingual education in a rigorous form for about 15 years, and we still have not achieved original program goals.

The authors wish to suggest three cautions in evaluating the impact of University programs on educational practice in Latin America. The first is that it is necessary to -stablish expectations which would be appropriate within our own settings as well as in Latin America. It is one thing to implement an innovative program under conditons of the unanimous support of a newly elected school board in a wealth community: it is quite another to implement a similar innovation in a district with a badly split board in a failing economy. Given current conditions it seems we are rather uncharitable in our judgments about our colleagues' efforts in Latin America.

The second caution concerns the use of project evaluation as a form of reaching conclusions about impact. Instead, what appears to be required is a longer range view of the cumulative effect of a series of projects over a number of years in a single country. As the authors encounter Latin American educators who were participants in University programs 5 to 10 years ago and who are now filling responsible positions in ministries of education, it is heartening to see that the skills acquired during participant training appear to be evident as the individuals carry out their efforts within the ministries. It is one thing to evaluate a textbook production program by the quality of textbooks which are produced

at the end of the project. It is quite another to see textbooks bein-produced in a country by individuals who acquired the skills in textbook production during the original project some five or six years earlier.

A third caution relates to the acceptance of stated project goals as real goals. Although the problem surely exists in evaluating the impact of programs in this country, it becomes magnified when working in the international arena. As indicated earlier, the goals of the participating organizations, A.I.D., the host government and the University probably differ in kind and type. For example, the University participated in a project in Paraguay some years ago. A major stated goal of that project was the decentralization of the Ministry of Education. Needless to say, that particular goal was not achieved. The term "decentralizacion" was not even utilized during the project. The host government by far preferred a substituted term--"desconcentracion". It is difficult to achieve a goal when the goal itself is not mentionable. Sub-goals of the project were acnieved. A curriculum department was established in the ministry. New schools were built, teachers and administrators trained. But the ministry was not decentralized. It appears likely that trust in the reality of stated project goals is even more risky in the international arena than it is at home.

In addition to noting the three cautions above related to evaluating impact on educational practice in Latin America, we would also like to draw attention to the issue of value-neutrality and the presumed need of bureaucracies for impersonality in the conduct of work. To the extent that we have been successful in inculcating those beliefs amongst the highly educated in Latin America, we may have rather unwittingly contributed to the avoidance of addressing basic value questions on the part of

professional educators. To some extent, in the opinion of the authors, the avoidance effect also has been experienced in this country. But given the differences in the socio-economic conditions between this country and Latin America, the value-neutral stance could be expected to have had more serious shortcomings in Latin America than in this country. It is suggested, then, that in the research efforts which need to be initiated in order to more fully understand the impact of U. S. programs upon educational practice in Latin America, it would be desirable to examine the impact of the exportation of scientific value-neutrality.

SUMMARY

In this section we have suggested that caution be utilized in assessing impact by attending to the issue of time, the issue of value-based criteria, the special importance of differentiating real and stated goals, and lastly, the suggestion that the impact of value-neutrality be explored. Under ordinary circumstances, patience is required to understand and perceive educational change. At times countries and continents face conditions which are not ordinary, and change in education must occur rapidly and dramatically. Such changes occur in times of complete and thoroughgoing social revolutions in which the institution of schooling is revamped from top to bottom. In the absence of such revolutions, educational change proceeds at a rather slow and evolutionary rate.

In this paper the authors have attempted to organize the experience of the University of New Mexico in its work with Latin America. We have focused upon the impact on the University itself, the evolution of the organizational unit, Latin American Programs in Education, and have raised

issues about the process of organizational legitimation. We have called attention to the unanticipated consequences relating to minority employment. We have suggested that an ethnographic study would probably be the most appropriate to rigorously address the issues in order to better understand the impact on the University campus as it continues its Latin American activity.

Secondly, we have discussed issues relating to the attempt to deliver professional expertness in a cultural and organizational milieu of an international character addressing the differing types of goals, expectations and degrees of bureaucratization evident in the differing organizational structures.

Thirdly, we have addressed the effects of the University's efforts upon the host countries who have received the services of the University calling for more modest expectations about pro-ram achievement as well as raising a caution in relation to the acceptance of stated goals as real given the nature of the participants in the efforts at educational change.

This paper serves as well to give direction to the research efforts at the University of New Mexico in that we can better understand the activities we are engaged in and derive some increased direction toward enhancing our own performance.

NOTES

1. Ortega, Ambrosio, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Control (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1973), pp. 127-31.

2. Eisenstadt, S.N. "Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization, and Debureaucratization," in Etzioni, Amitai, (ed.) Complex Organizations. A Sociological Reader (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 272.

3. IBID, p. 272.

4. Etzioni, Amitai, A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations (New York: The Free Press, 1961), p. 16.